

VA Medical Center, Aspinwall Division  
Ambulatory Quarters (Building No. 2)  
5103 Delafield Avenue  
Aspinwall Vicinity  
Allegheny County  
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-5438-B

HABS  
PA,  
2-ASPWA.V,  
1-B-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
MID-ATLANTIC REGION, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19106

HABS  
PA,  
2-ASPWALL,  
1-B-

# HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

VA MEDICAL CENTER,  
ASPINWALL DIVISION, AMBULATORY QUARTERS  
(Building No. 2)

HABS No. PA-5438-B

## Location:

The Ambulant Quarters are located in the southeast quadrant of the hospital complex on the south side of an axial roadway leading southeast from the main entry drive, approximately 575 feet from the end of the drive. The Medical Center is located at 5103 Delafield Avenue, Aspinwall vicinity, O'Hara Township, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania.

USGS Pittsburgh East Quadrangle. Universal Transverse Mercator  
Coordinates: 17.594100.4483140

Present Owner: United States Veterans Administration

Present Occupant: United States Veterans Administration

Present Use: Veterans Hospital

## Significance:

The Ambulant Quarters is one of the original structures erected by the United States Veterans' Bureau at Aspinwall in 1924. The building originally housed ambulatory tuberculosis patients, who were kept separated from the ward patients in the Infirmary Building (Building No. 1). The Ambulant Quarters is significant for its associations with the Veterans' Bureau's national efforts to expand its medical facilities during the 1920s and is representative of the earliest period of construction at the Aspinwall site. Later as the hospital's needs and requirements changed the Ambulant Quarters were adapted and it continued service as a research facility.

Part I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1924.
2. Architect/Engineer: United States Veterans' Bureau.
3. Original and Subsequent Owners: United States Veterans Administration.
4. Builders, contractors, suppliers: Unknown.
5. Original plans and construction: United States Veterans' Bureau.
6. Alterations and additions: The Ambulant Quarters has undergone a number of alterations since its construction in 1924, these include the removal of slate roofing shingles, and their replacement with asbestos shingles, the replacement of multiple-light double-hung windows in the southwest facade with large-pane awning sash, as well as the replacement of the original multi-light door, side lights, and fanlight at the principal, southwest, entry by a modern aluminum and glass door and stucco panels.

The ambulant patient's rooms were converted to kitchen helper's locker rooms and storage areas at an unspecified date, and in 1965 interior spaces were converted for use as a research facility.

B. Historical Context:

The Ambulant Quarters was one of the initial structures erected by the United States Veterans' Bureau at the Aspinwall site. The building originally housed ambulatory tuberculosis patients, who were separated from the ward patients in the Infirmary (Building No. 1).

The Ambulant Quarters is representative of the architectural style established for the Aspinwall Hospital by the Veterans' Bureau. It is a two-story red brick Georgian Revival style building with a hipped roof and projecting cross gables.

During the 1950s the building was used for storage and locker room facilities for the hospital's kitchen staff. Most recently the building served as a research facility and presently the building is vacant.

Part II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: Georgian Revival.
2. Condition of fabric: Good.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: Two-story rectangular-plan building with partial basement measuring approximately 121 feet by 28 feet. A projecting pavilion, measuring 6 feet by 32 feet, is centered on the front, southwest, facade.
2. Foundations: Reinforced concrete.
3. Walls: Structural tile with exterior brick veneer.
4. Structural systems, framing: One-way concrete slab construction including columns, beams and flooring.
5. Porches, stoops, balconies, bulkheads: A small concrete stoop is centered on the southwest facade at the main entry. The stoop is connected to a loading dock constructed of concrete block with a concrete slab deck.
6. Chimneys: A narrow brick chimney is attached to the northeast facade immediately southeast of the facade's pedimented entry. This chimney is not original.
7. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: The principal entry on the southwest facade consists of a modern aluminum and glass door surrounded by plaster infill side panels and tympanum. The door is set within a rowlock elliptical arch with concrete keystone and imposts.
  - b. Windows and shutters: Windows on the northeast facade have double-hung six-over-six wood sash with concrete sills and brick soldier course lintels. Between these openings are smaller windows fitted with four-over-four double-hung wood sash. Elliptical windows in the northeast and southwest gables have keystones at each compass quadrant and are fitted with fixed sash with radiating muntins. Centered below the elliptical window on the northeast facade is a round-arched

window with a brick rowlock arch, concrete sills, keystone, and imposts, and a fifteen-over-eight light, arched, double-hung wood sash. Window openings on the southwest facade consist of modern six-light aluminum awning sash.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: Hipped roof with cross gables centered on the northeast and southwest facades. Covered with asphalt shingles.
- b. Cornice, eaves: Simple wood box cornice with slight return at gables. Cornice rests on a double soldier course of bricks below wide eaves.
- c. Dormers, cupolas, towers: None.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor Plans:

- a. Basement: Open plan in central section, remainder unexcavated.
  - b. First floor: Predominantly open plan with randomly placed partitions for office space.
  - c. Second floor: Central section is open plan, with bathroom facilities, a small room, and stairway located on the northeast side. A series of small rooms, averaging 6.5 feet by 9 feet, are located on both sides of the building's center section against the northeast exterior wall. Thin plaster partitions extend 10 feet into the principal space from the walls of these small rooms. These partitions are approximately 7 feet high and occur every 11 feet.
- 2. Stairways: Concrete and steel stairs with composition treads and wood hand rails on wrought iron balusters.
  - 3. Flooring: Concrete floors with linoleum tile.
  - 4. Wall and ceiling finishes: Painted plaster walls and suspended plaster ceilings.
  - 5. Openings:
    - a. Doorways and doors: Wood doors in steel frames.

- b. Windows: Plain plaster surrounds with beveled plaster sills.
  - 6. Decorative features and trim: No significant decorative features exist other than those addressed previously.
  - 7. Hardware: Brass and aluminum.
  - 8. Mechanical equipment: Mechanical equipment partially upgraded since original construction. Steam radiators are extant. Some light fixtures replaced with modern florescent units.
- D. Site:
- 1. General setting and orientation: The Ambulant Quarters are located immediately east of the Infirmary Building. The front facade faces southwest, towards a view of lawns and the woods beyond.
  - 2. Historic landscape design: The building is placed within the 1924 landscape design, which created a campus-like setting of buildings, tree-lined walks, and roads. Lawns dominate the building's immediate setting, with some trees and shrubbery present.
  - 3. Outbuildings: None.

### Part III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Original Architectural Drawings: Located at Engineering Services, VA Medical Center, Oakland Division, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
- B. Early Views: Located at Engineering Services, VA Medical Center, Oakland Division, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
- C. Interviews: Personnel, VA Medical Center, Aspinwall Division, O'Hara Township, Pennsylvania.
- D. Bibliography:
  - 1. Primary and unpublished sources:

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Historic Architectural Drawings -- Aspinwall Facility. Various files held at Engineering Services, VA Medical Center, Oakland Division, Pittsburgh, PA.

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2. Secondary and published sources:

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*Federal Architect*, 7 (January 1937): 37, 43.

*Federal Architect*, 12 (July 1943): 12-13.

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Part IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This documentation was undertaken in July 1989 in accordance with a Memorandum of Agreement between the United States Veterans Administration, the Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Officer, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation as a mitigative measure prior to the demolition of the subject buildings at the Aspinwall Division Medical Center.

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